

PROGRAM SOLICITATION
for a Cooperative Agreement to

**STUDY USER SATISFACTION WITH ACCESS TO GOVERNMENT
INFORMATION AND SERVICES AT PUBLIC LIBRARIES
AND PUBLIC ACCESS COMPUTING CENTERS**

Issued by
Institute of Museum and Library Services
Office of Library Services
1800 M Street NW, 9th Floor
Washington, DC 20036

Proposals in response to this solicitation must be RECEIVED at the above address by 5:00 P.M., Eastern Standard Time on **July 20, 2005**.

Proposals must be sent by hard copy, with an original and ten (10) additional copies to the following address:

Institute of Museum and Library Services
Office of Library Services
1800 M Street NW, 9th Floor
Washington, DC 20036-5802
Attention: Martha Crawley

[The Institute of Museum and Library Services continues to experience delays in the delivery of First-class and Priority mail. In addition, contents are subject to irradiation that may damage materials. Please consider using alternative delivery services.]

For information about this solicitation, please contact: Martha Crawley, Program Officer, Office of Library Services, Institute of Museum and Library Services, 1800 M Street NW, 9th Floor, Washington, DC 20036-5802, Telephone: 202-653-4667, e-mail: mcrawley@imls.gov.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION.....	3
II.	AWARD INFORMATION.....	5
III.	ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION.....	5
IV.	APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION.....	6
V.	APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION.....	9
VI.	AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION.....	10
VII.	AGENCY CONTACTS	13
VIII.	OTHER INFORMATION.....	13

The Institute of Museum and Library Services

The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) is an independent federal agency that fosters leadership, innovation, and a lifetime of learning. IMLS makes grants dedicated to creating and sustaining a nation of learners by helping libraries and museums serve their communities. IMLS supports the nation's 15,000 museums and 122,000 libraries. IMLS encourages collaboration and partnership between and among libraries and museums to maximize their impact and magnify the use of their resources. IMLS supports all types of museums, from art and history to science and zoos, and all types of libraries and archives, from public and academic to research and school.

Created by the Museum and Library Services Act of 1996, P.L. 104-208, IMLS administers the Library Services and Technology Act and the Museum Services Act. In 2003, Congress reauthorized the Museum and Library Services Act, P.L. 108-81, reaffirming the vital role that museums and libraries play in our communities. IMLS receives policy advice from the Presidentially appointed, Senate confirmed National Museum and Library Services Board.

SECTION I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

I.A. Background

The Internet has transformed the way that the public gets the information and services it needs and the way that the public and private sector supply information and services to the general public. In order for the American people to continue to be active participants in their communities and governments, they need reliable, accurate, and up-to-date information about their federal, state, and local government and its services, much of which is increasingly delivered via the Internet. Over the past few years, numerous studies have addressed the information-seeking behavior of the American public, and have found that the population exhibits a range of information-seeking behavior that includes the following: (1) accesses the Internet from home, school, or work; (2) does not access the Internet by choice, getting information and services in other ways; (3) cannot afford the service; (4) accesses the Internet from public libraries or other public access computing centers; or (5) does not have the literacy or information skills to make effective use of the information and services available through the Internet. Because public libraries and other public access computing centers provide an essential service to the public by making computers and technology available, it is critical that these institutions are able to effectively deliver federal, state, and local government information and services so that the public can access such information and services, and the public is satisfied with the information and services that it receives at these institutions.

A number of national studies have looked at the demographic and geographic factors affecting Internet behavior and use. The Pew Internet and American Life survey has provided large amounts of data on the ways that Americans use the Internet, and is issuing ongoing reports from the survey. Both public agencies and non-profit organizations are taking up a wide range of Internet access issues and through public-private partnerships, such as the America Connects Consortium and other initiative such as Neighborhood Networks, are assisting under-served populations to get Internet access and to acquire the skills to use the Internet. The E-Government Act of 2002 called for the promotion of access to the Internet to provide increased opportunities for citizen participation in government, and an interagency committee issued a report looking at disparities in Internet access across a demographic spectrum.

Few studies, however, have looked at the kinds of assistance (training, tutorials, classes, reference services) that users are receiving when looking for federal, state, and local government information and services, whether via the Internet or through traditional means (walk-in, mail, telephone), and whether users are satisfied with the assistance that they are receiving from public libraries and public access computing centers. In order to address this critical information gap and to enhance the quality of library services nationwide, the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) wishes to undertake a study to better understand how users are accessing federal, state, and local government information and services and what kinds of assistance public libraries and other public access computing centers are offering to users seeking government information and services.

I.B. Scope of Work

The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) invites proposals for a project to conduct a research study on how the part of the population with limited access to Internet resources (individuals who do not have broadband access from home, work, or school; who choose to access government services and information from locations other than home, work, or school; or who do so through traditional means of access) accesses federal, state and local government services and information, and whether such users are satisfied with the information and services they are able to access. Additionally, the study shall examine the ways that public libraries and public access computing centers provide assistance (e.g., reference services, tutorials, classes, training) to users seeking federal, state, and local government information and services.

The study shall be framed by the following questions:

1. What are user preferences for the means of delivery of federal, state, and local government services and information: a) only online; b) only through traditional means of access (walk-in, mail, telephone); or c) both online and through traditional means?
2. Where does the part of the population with limited access to online resources go to get access government information and services?
3. What kinds of training, classes, tutorials, and reference services (one-on-one, traditional, virtual, or other interactive help mechanisms) do public libraries and public access computing centers provide to assist users in accessing government information and services, and through traditional means of access? What kind of training is available for librarians, educators, and trainers offering the training?
4. How effective are training, classes, tutorials, and reference services received through public libraries and public access computing centers at increasing the public's information and government media literacy?
5. To what extent do public libraries and public access computing centers assist the part of the population with limited access to online resources to access government information and services in the following ways: by providing access itself; by increasing general Internet media literacy; and by assisting with access via traditional means?

The study will include an analysis of the means used to access government information and services by the part of the population that has limited access to Internet resources and the level of user satisfaction with assistance provided by public libraries and public access computing centers to obtain such information and services.

The project goal is a report that can be used by providers of assistance to the public in public libraries, public access computing centers, and their clients. IMLS expects that the results of the study will be widely disseminated.

SECTION II. AWARD INFORMATION

II.A. IMLS anticipates awarding only one (1) Cooperative Agreement.

II.B. Awards under this program will be up to \$500,000. No cost sharing is required because key project elements meet the IMLS criteria for research, but cost sharing will be considered as an evaluation factor.

II.C. The award will be for a maximum of two (2) years from date of award.

II.D. The estimated award date is September 30, 2005. IMLS will notify all applicants of final decisions. No information about the status of an application will be released until all applications have been reviewed and all negotiations are concluded.

II.E. The IMLS Program Officer, will be involved with the study as follows:

II.E.1 In the beginning months of the study, the IMLS Program Officer will be in close contact with the recipient of the Cooperative Award (hereinafter “Cooperator”) to advise and assist in development of the study, including suggesting potential study criteria and geographic areas of focus.

II.E.2. Throughout the process of the study, the IMLS Program Officer will provide advice and input to the Cooperator as appropriate.

II.E.3. The IMLS Program Officer will review updates from the Cooperator and may contact the Cooperator for updates and to discuss aspects of this study.

SECTION III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

Only institutions and organizations that meet the IMLS National Leadership Grant criteria for eligible library applicants are eligible to apply (see 2005 National Leadership Guidelines, page 1.2, available at <http://www.imls.gov/grants/library/pdf/2005NLG.pdf>). Eligible organizations include all types of libraries except federal and for-profit libraries. Eligible libraries include public, school, academic, special, private (not-for-profit), archives, library agencies, and library consortia. In addition, research libraries that give the public access to services and materials suitable for scholarly research not otherwise available to the public and that are not part of a university or college are eligible. Institutions of higher education, including public and not-for-profit universities and colleges, are also eligible. Graduate schools of library and information science may apply as part of an institution of higher education. Library applicants may apply individually or as partners.

IMLS recognizes the potential of for-profit entities as well as public, non-profit, and non-US entities to contribute to this project. Although such entities may not serve as the official applicants, they are encouraged to participate as partners.

SECTION IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

IV.A. This solicitation provides all information needed to apply for this opportunity. See <http://www.ims.gov/grants/library/pdf/nlgforms05.pdf> for electronic versions of the face sheet and budget forms. Applicants may download and print these forms. No applications will be accepted electronically.

IV.B. Proposals in response to this solicitation must be received by 5:00 PM Eastern Standard Time on **July 20, 2005**.

Proposals must be sent by hard copy, with an original and ten (10) additional copies to the following address:

Institute of Museum and Library Services
Office of Library Services
1800 M Street NW, 9th Floor
Washington, DC 20036-5802
Attention: Martha Crawley

[The Institute of Museum and Library Services continues to experience delays in the delivery of First-class and Priority mail. In addition, contents are subject to irradiation that may damage materials. Please consider using alternative delivery services.]

For information about this solicitation, please contact:

Martha Crawley, Program Officer
Office of Library Services
Institute of Museum and Library Services
1800 M Street NW, 9th Floor,
Washington, DC 20036-5802

Telephone: 202-653-4667
E-mail: mcrawley@ims.gov

IV.C. Any proposal received after the time specified for receipt will not be considered unless (1) it was sent by surface mail and IMLS determines that the late receipt was due solely to handling by IMLS after receipt at the Institute, (2) it is the only proposal received, or (3) it offers significant cost or technical advantage, and it is received before an award determination has been made.

IV.D. In order to streamline and simplify the management of federal financial assistance, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has directed that all federal agencies require applicants to provide a Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number when applying for federal grants or cooperative agreements on or after October 1, 2003. The DUNS number will be required whether an applicant is submitting a paper application or an electronic application.

IV.E. Format

The application narrative must be no more than ten pages, and must address the proposal Evaluation Criteria listed in Section V in the order presented there, with each response numbered, and must:

- Be addressed in the order presented, and must be identified using headings, bold type, or a list of references to page or section numbers to guide reviewers in their evaluation.
- Provide sufficient information for reviewers to evaluate all Evaluation Criteria.
- Conform to the space limits of ten single-spaced, one-sided pages.
- Use 8.5 by 11 inch format
- Leave a margin of at least 0.5 inch on all sides.
- Be printed on only one side of each page.
- Have each page numbered.
- Be printed in a sans-serif, 12-point typeface with no more than six lines per vertical inch and standard spacing between letters. Condensed fonts are not acceptable. Handwritten applications will not be accepted.

IV.F. Content

Signed proposals in response to the solicitation, in original and ten (10) copies, shall include:

IV.F.1. A face sheet (see <http://www.ims.gov/grants/library/pdf/nlgforms05.pdf>).

IV.F.2. A single-spaced Abstract of no more than one page (600-word maximum), containing the following elements: (1) project title, (2) description of project goals and major activities, and (3) anticipated results.

IV.F.3. A narrative that includes:

- A plan for collecting and analyzing relevant existing literature and results of previous studies;
- A preliminary outline of a proposed study design, including discussion of the methodology for identifying study participants; for selecting appropriate study methodologies (including but not limited to focus groups, telephone, online, and mail surveys, etc.); and for development of the study instrument(s);

- A proposed timetable for activities and deliverables including the proposed study design, testing and implementation of the study, analysis and dissemination of results, and project evaluation; and
- A plan to disseminate project results, including a plan to inform libraries, public access computing centers, institutions of higher learning, and relevant professional service organizations about the study findings.

IV.F.4.Budget

The proposal must include a Detailed Budget for each year of the proposed project, a Summary Budget, and a Budget Justification that explains the elements of the Detailed Budget. See budget forms at see <http://www.ims.gov/grants/library/pdf/nlgforms05.pdf>. Applicants may create their own budget forms as long as all items of information included in the forms are included.

- Only costs attributable to achieving specific project activities should be included in the budget.
- The Detailed Budget should include cost categories identified in the sample budget layout and should identify whether support is requested from IMLS or is contributed. A separate Detailed Budget must be submitted for each year of the project. All of the items listed, whether supported by award funds or cost-sharing contributions, must be reasonable, necessary to accomplish project objectives, allowable in terms of the applicable federal cost principles, auditable, and incurred during the award period.
- Consultant fees must identify costs by hourly rates or daily fees. For services to be outsourced, the applicant should, whenever possible, provide detailed bids and justification of how the proposed contractor was selected.
- The cost of student scholarships, fellowships, other stipends, and/or tuition may not be included in the amount on which indirect costs are requested.
- The Budget Justification should explain all elements of the Detailed Budget. For example, the Budget Justification should explain the role that each person listed in the project budget will play, and should justify all proposed equipment, supplies, travel, services and other expenses. The applicant should provide specifications for all hardware and software for which IMLS funding is requested.
- Resumes or vitae of no more than two pages *each* for all key personnel (both staff and consultants) must be included.

IV.F.5. The applicant must provide a Schedule of Completion that shows when each major project activity will be completed and how award funds will be expended throughout the project. The Schedule of Completion must correspond to the activities described in the Narrative. It must include each major activity for which direct costs are requested from IMLS. It must indicate milestones for completion of each major project activity and show how award funds are to be spent over the course of the project.

IV.F.6. Planning documents that informed the project design, such as needs assessments or digitization plans, should be attached as appendices.

SECTION V. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

V.A. IMLS will determine whether an applicant is eligible and whether an application is complete.

V.B. All eligible and complete proposals will be competitively reviewed by individual field review and/or panel review. Reviewers will be drawn from professionals in the field, with relevant expertise. The IMLS Director makes final funding decisions based on evaluations by reviewers and the needs of the agency as identified in this solicitation. The evaluation will be based on the following considerations:

V.B.1. Need and intended results

Because IMLS has identified the need, proposals should show:

- Extent to which the project is likely to increase the knowledge and understanding of user satisfaction with assistance to access federal, state, and local government information and services provided at public libraries and public access computing centers.
- How project findings will be analyzed and presented to inform interested parties.

V.B.2. Project design and evaluation plan

Proposals should show:

- Extent to which the project reflects an understanding of general planning and evaluation issues related to library services, and of outcomes-based planning and evaluation issues related to library services.
- Extent to which the project poses the research questions clearly, explains through the plan of work how the questions will be investigated, how the data will be gathered and analyzed and how results will be evaluated. The proposal should provide evidence that the results are likely to be valid, reliable, and generalizable.

V.B.3. Project resources: time, budget; personnel; management plan

Proposals should show:

- Extent to which the project proposes efficient, effective, and successful approaches to accomplish clear goals and objectives.
- Evidence of an institutional infrastructure for development, delivery, and management of the project.
- Evidence that the project activities will be effectively completed, that the applicant institution is capable of carrying out the project to its successful conclusion through the deployment and management of resources including money, facilities, equipment, and supplies, and that financial management will be sound.
- Evidence that the project personnel are qualified to accomplish project goals and activities.
- Extent to which personnel commit adequate time to manage and implement the project activities.
- Extent to which personnel demonstrate appropriate experience and expertise in the specific area the project addresses.

V.B.4. Dissemination

Proposals should show:

- Extent to which project results, products, processes and benefits will be made transparent and accessible through effective communication channels in the library and information field.
- Evidence that a variety of appropriate media will be used to communicate project findings and results that are understandable and accessible to a broad and diverse audience. Projects are encouraged to establish web sites to report progress and results as one mechanism for disseminating information about the project.

SECTION VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

VI.A. Cooperative Agreement

The instrument that will be awarded as a result of this Program Solicitation is a Cooperative Agreement, as defined by the Federal Grant and Cooperative Agreement Act of 1977, Public Law 95-224. A Cooperative Agreement is a cost reimbursement instrument. No fee or profit (or other increment above allowable cost) is allowed.

For nonprofit organizations except colleges and universities, the provisions of Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circulars A-110 (“Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Nonprofit Organizations”) and A-122 as amended, will be incorporated by reference into the Cooperative agreement.

For colleges and universities, the provisions of OMB Circulars A110 and A-21 (“Cost Principles for Educational Institution”), as amended, will be incorporated by reference into the Cooperative Agreement.

For units of state and local governments and federally recognized Indian tribal governments, the provisions of the government-wide Common Rule issued pursuant to OMB Circular A-102 and codified by the Institute of Museum and Library Services as “Part 1183-Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements,” OMB Circulars A-128 (“Audits of State and Local Governments”) and A-87 (Cost Principles Applicable to Grants and Contracts with State and Local Governments) will be incorporated by reference into the Cooperative Agreement.

VI.B. Terms and Conditions

Institute of Museum and Library Services Cooperative Agreements are subject to the General Terms and Conditions for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to Organizations.

Except as otherwise stated in the Program Solicitation, all terms and conditions of IMLS National Leadership Grants 2005 guidelines will apply (see guidelines at <http://www.ims.gov/grants/library/pdf/2005NLG.pdf>).

VI.C. Assurances and Certifications

Assurance of Compliance with Non Discrimination Requirements

By submission of a proposal, the Cooperator hereby agrees that it will execute projects, productions, workshops, and programs in accordance with the requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, where applicable. Copies of the nondiscrimination regulations identified above may be obtained by writing to the Office of Civil Rights, Institute of Museum and Library Services, 1800 M Street NW, 9th Floor. Washington, DC 20036.

Certification Concerning Debarment and Suspension

The Cooperator certifies that, as required by regulations implementing Executive Order 12549, “Debarment and Suspension,” neither it nor its principals: (a) is presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this transaction by any Federal department or agency; (b) has, within a three-year period preceding this proposal, been convicted of or had a civil judgment rendered against it for commission of a

fraud or a criminal offense in connection with a public (Federal, state, or local) transaction or contract under a public transaction; for violation of a Federal or state antitrust statutes; or for commission of embezzlement, theft, forgery, bribery, falsification or destruction of records, making false statements, or receiving stolen property; (c) is presently indicted or otherwise criminally or civilly charged by a governmental entity with commission of any of the offenses enumerated in (b) of this certification; and (d) has within a three-year period preceding this proposal had any public transactions terminated for cause or default; and that it will include this clause without modification in all lower-tier covered transactions (excluding contracts under \$25,000), solicitations, and proposals.

Where the Cooperator or any lower-tier participant is unable to certify to this statement, it shall provide an explanation to the IMLS Grants and Contract Office.

Delinquent Debt Certification

The Cooperator certifies that it is not delinquent on any Federal debt or, if it is, will provide explanatory information. Examples of relevant debt include delinquent taxes, audit disallowance, and benefit overpayments.

Drug-Free Workplace Act Certification

The successful recipient of the Cooperative Agreement will also be required to provide the certification required by the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988 (41 USC 701 et seq.; also implemented through the Debarment and Suspension regulations).

VI.D. Reporting

It will be the responsibility of the Cooperator to file required reports. Interim narrative performance reports must be submitted within thirty (30) days after the end of each six-month period for the duration of the award, except for the final six months (when final reports will be submitted within ninety (90) days after the end of the award period).

An annual financial status report must be submitted within thirty (30) days after the end of the first year of the project, unless the award is for a one-year project. For one-year projects, only a final financial status report is required.

Final performance and final financial status reports must be submitted within ninety (90) days of the close of the award period. Interim and final financial status reports must be submitted on the required forms [either SF 269, Financial Status Report (long form), or SF269A, Financial Status Report (short form)].

Failure to comply with the reporting requirements may result in the loss of current or future funding from IMLS.

SECTION VII. AGENCY CONTACTS/IMLS PROGRAM OFFICER

For information on this solicitation, write or call:

Martha Crawley, Program Officer
Office of Library Services
Institute of Museum and Library Services
1800 M Street NW, 9th Floor,
Washington, DC 20036-5802

Telephone: 202-653-4667
E-mail: mcrawley@imls.gov

SECTION VIII. OTHER INFORMATION

Rejection and Award

IMLS reserves the right to reject any or all proposals.